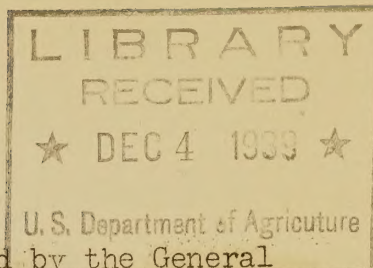


1.94  
Ad422Cr

CR-5

ON THE CONSUMER FRONT



This is an excerpt from a radio program presented by the General Federation of Women's Clubs on November 3, 1939, at 1:45 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, over the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company, Washington, D. C. In it, Bryson Rash asks Donald E. Montgomery what's been happening recently to prices of consumers' goods. Mr. Montgomery is Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. The program, prepared by the Consumers' Counsel Division of the AAA, is presented each Friday at this time.

ANNOUNCER: And now for some pocketbook news from Mr. Montgomery, Consumers' Counsel in the Department of Agriculture. I'm going to be the inquiring consumer this time, Mr. Montgomery. And I'm going to fire some questions at you about prices.

MONTGOMERY: Fire when ready.

RASH: What's the biggest news about food prices this week?

MONTGOMERY: It's about sugar, Bryson.

RASH: Is sugar cheap again?

MONTGOMERY: Wait, till I tell you. Remember how it went up in September, after war was declared?

RASH: Sure. About every housewife I know rushed out and bought pounds and pounds of sugar. And how the price zoomed!

MONTGOMERY: And that was too bad, because there wasn't any need to stock up like that.

RASH: Plenty of sugar?

MONTGOMERY: Exactly. Plenty of sugar then, and now.

RASH: Has the price come down any?

MONTGOMERY: Only a little. But consumers are paying too much for it, and producers seem to be getting a smaller share of the consumer's sugar dollar.

RASH: What makes you think that, Mr. Montgomery?



MONTGOMERY: Why, this. Raw sugar costs now just what it did before the war started, but consumers have to pay about a cent a pound more.

RASH: You think consumers should have to pay no more now than they did before the war threw the scare into them? Is that right?

MONTGOMERY: That's the way it looks to me, Bryson.

RASH: But maybe the stores are just slow in dropping their prices.

MONTGOMERY: Yes they are, but remember how fast they raised prices in September!

RASH: Do you think consumers should ask their grocers why sugar prices don't come down some more?

MONTGOMERY: Well it would be a fair question.

RASH: Ummm. There's something to pass on to the little woman shopper. Anything else?

MONTGOMERY: Uh, uh. Last week, pork chops and lard were a little cheaper.

RASH: As cheap as they were before the war?

MONTGOMERY: Well, in most of the big cities pork chops are back to where they were last August, or even a little less.

RASH: Same with lard?

MONTGOMERY: No. Lard hasn't dropped so much yet. But here's a strange fact. Lard's a good deal cheaper in some cities than in others. For example, take Pittsburgh and Denver. Last August, you could buy a pound of lard for about the same price in those two cities. Now, in Pittsburgh, lard costs only 2 percent more. But in Denver, it costs 28 percent more than it did in August.

RASH: Ummm. I should think Denver consumers would want to look into that . . . How about butter and eggs?



MONTGOMERY: They both dropped a little last week.

RASH: All the way back to pre-war prices?

MONTGOMERY: Oh no. You see, we're still in the season when butter and egg supplies aren't so large. Butter and eggs always cost more in the fall than in summer.

RASH: Mr. Montgomery, last week you told us the trade was saying that clothes would probably cost more next spring. Have you got any news about some other things?

MONTGOMERY: Let me see. What things would you like to know about, Bryson.

RASH: Take furniture, for instance.

MONTGOMERY: I saw one trade report that said a suite of furniture that sold at wholesale for \$125 last August would probably sell now for \$150.

RASH: That's quite a jump, isn't it?

MONTGOMERY: Of course it's a trade report. I don't know whether it's actually happened yet.

RASH: How about refrigerators?

MONTGOMERY: The trade doesn't expect refrigerators to cost more until the 1940 models come out. That will be in January.

RASH: And then will prices go up?

MONTGOMERY: That's what they say.

RASH: I remember you told us last week, Mr. Montgomery, that raw wool was costing more now than before the war. Does that mean carpets and rugs will be more expensive?

MONTGOMERY: Many rug and carpet manufacturers already have put their prices up. The trade papers say they expect more increases before long.

RASH: Does that go for wool blankets, too?

MONTGOMERY: Well, wholesale prices for all-wool blankets are already 25 percent higher. Part-wool blankets are up 10 percent. The trade says these higher wholesale prices will show up in the retail stores after the first of the year.

RASH: Those are facts worth knowing, Mr. Montgomery. Next week, I'm going to have another list of goods to ask you about. But that's about all we can crowd in today.